



Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) Statewide Results: Spring 2012

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Commissioner

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Commissioner's Foreword

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to provide you with the statewide results from the spring 2012 Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) tests. MEPA is a statewide assessment that measures the performance of English language learner (ELL) students and the progress they are making toward English proficiency. All Massachusetts ELL students in grades K–12 whose education is publicly funded must participate in the statewide English proficiency assessment.

This report summarizes the overall results for more than 67,000 ELL students who participated in the spring 2012 MEPA tests. It also summarizes the progress ELL students have made toward attaining English language proficiency by comparing their 2012 performance with their prior performance on either the spring or fall 2011 MEPA tests.

I am pleased to note that the overall participation rate on spring 2012 MEPA tests increased one percentage point since spring 2011, and has increased three percentage points to 95 percent since 2010. Also, the percent of ELL students making progress in attaining English proficiency in spring 2012 MEPA increased five percentage points, from 58 percent in spring 2011 to 63 percent in spring 2012.

This was the final year of the MEPA test administration. Massachusetts has joined the WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) consortium and beginning in January 2013, the ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) tests will replace MEPA as the annual statewide assessment for English language learners. These tests will be based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards which focus on development of academic language skills by ELLs. The Department's recent membership in the WIDA consortium and the adoption of new English language development standards and assessments beginning in the 2012–2013 school year are part of a larger initiative called RETELL (Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners) that provides a comprehensive blueprint for transforming ELL education in Massachusetts.

Thank you for your many contributions to the education of English Language Learners in Massachusetts. I hope you find this report informative and helpful.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Executive Summary

MEPA is a statewide test that measures the performance of students in Massachusetts who are English language learners (ELLs) and the progress they are making toward attaining English proficiency.

Title III of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law requires that states report annually on the performance of ELL students in the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and on their progress toward achieving English proficiency. In addition, Chapter 386 of the Massachusetts Acts of 2002 (known as *Question 2*) requires English language learners in Massachusetts to participate in assessments of English language proficiency. The MEPA program was administered in order to comply with these federal and state assessment requirements, and to

- assist in determining the level of English proficiency of ELL students;
- measure student, school, and district performance on the state's learning standards as detailed in the Massachusetts *English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes for English Language Learners*;
- improve student achievement and classroom instruction by providing diagnostic feedback with respect to the acquisition of knowledge and skills in English.

MEPA is composed of two tests. The MEPA-Reading/Writing test (MEPA-R/W) assesses reading and writing knowledge and skills and was administered either in print or online. The Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) is an assessment of listening and speaking skills based on the observation and rating of each student during ordinary classroom activities by a trained and qualified MELA-O administrator.

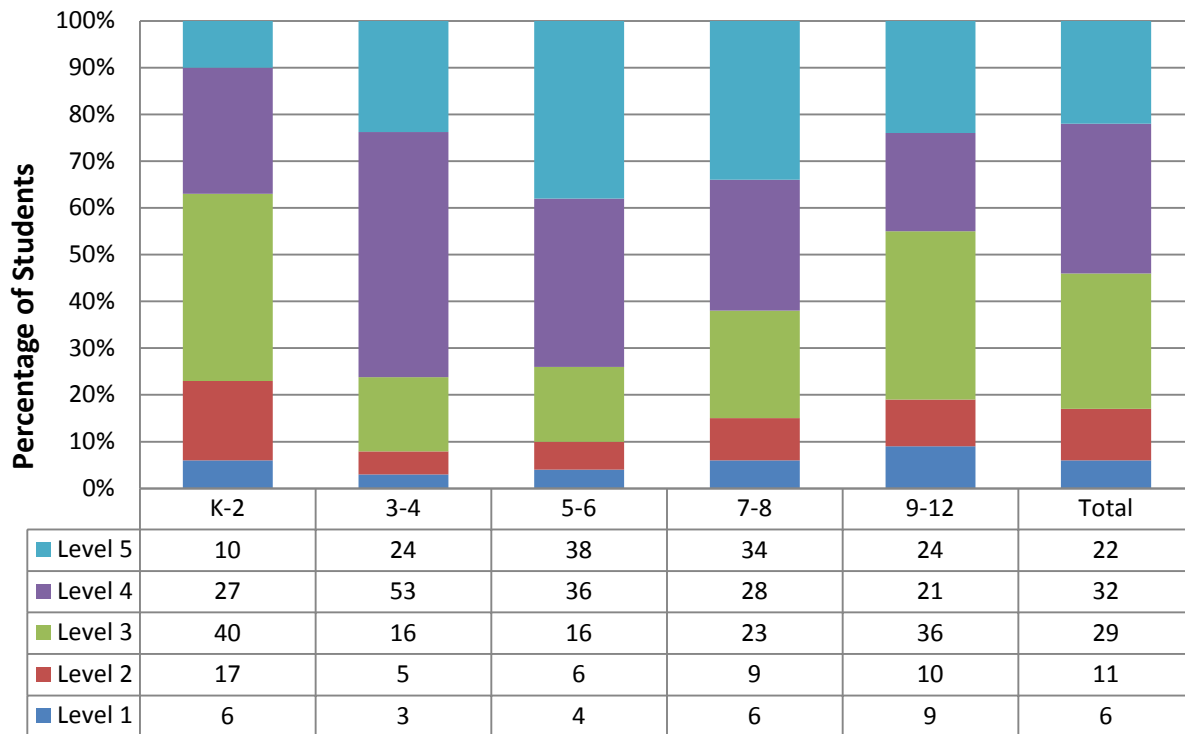
In spring 2012, all Massachusetts students in grades K–12 whose education was publicly funded and who were reported to the Department as ELL were required to participate in the MEPA tests. The only exceptions were students who are deaf or hard of hearing, students who required an alternate assessment (for MEPA-R/W tests only), and students who required a test accommodation that was not available. Statewide, 1,122 ELL students, or about 1.5% of all ELL students, did not participate in MEPA tests for one of those reasons.

Additional information about the MEPA program and the changes made to the tests in 2009 is provided in the Background section of this report.

Major Findings

- In March 2012, 67,825 of the 71,636 ELL students in grades K–12 participated in all four portions of the MEPA tests, a participation rate of 95 percent. The overall participation rate in MEPA increased by one percentage point, from 94 percent in 2011 to 95 percent in 2012.
- Overall, 22 percent of ELL students performed at *Level 5*, the highest performance level, on the spring 2012 MEPA tests. The percentage at *Level 5* varied by grade span, ranging from 10 to 38 percent (see Figure 1). Generally, a student who scores at *Level 5* is able to perform ordinary classroom work in English and is recommended for reclassification as a student who is no longer reported as an English language learner. The percentage of students who attained *Level 5* was 10 percent at grade span K–2, 24 percent at grade span 3–4, 38 percent at grade span 5–6, 34 percent at grade span 7–8, and 24 percent at grade span 9–12.

Figure 1. Spring 2012 MEPA: Performance Level by Grade Span



- Performance on the spring 2012 MEPA tests varied according to the number of years ELL students had been enrolled in Massachusetts schools. The percentages of students who performed at *Levels 1* and *2* generally declined the longer students had been enrolled, and the percentages at *Levels 4* and *5* tended to increase the longer students were enrolled. See Tables 2–6 on pages 8–12.
- Overall, 63 percent of ELL students who participated in the spring 2012 MEPA tests and who also participated in the spring or fall of 2011 made progress toward attaining English proficiency. The percentage making progress varied by grade span, ranging from 52 to 72 percent. The percentage of students who made progress since their prior test administration was 72 percent at grade span K–2, 59 percent at grade span 3–4, 65 percent at grade span 5–6, 63 percent at grade span 7–8, and 52 percent at grade span 9–12. The overall percentage of students making progress increased from 58 percent in 2011 to 63 percent in 2012, as shown in Figures 2 and 3 on the following page. Performance of ELL students in their *second* year of enrollment in Massachusetts was the most encouraging, with 75 percent making progress. Students making progress increased seven percentage points at grade spans of 3-4, 5-6, and 9-12. See page 5 for the definition of “making progress” and page 15 for more data on the ELL students making progress in spring 2012 MEPA.

Figure 2. Students Making Progress by Grade Span in Spring 2012 MEPA

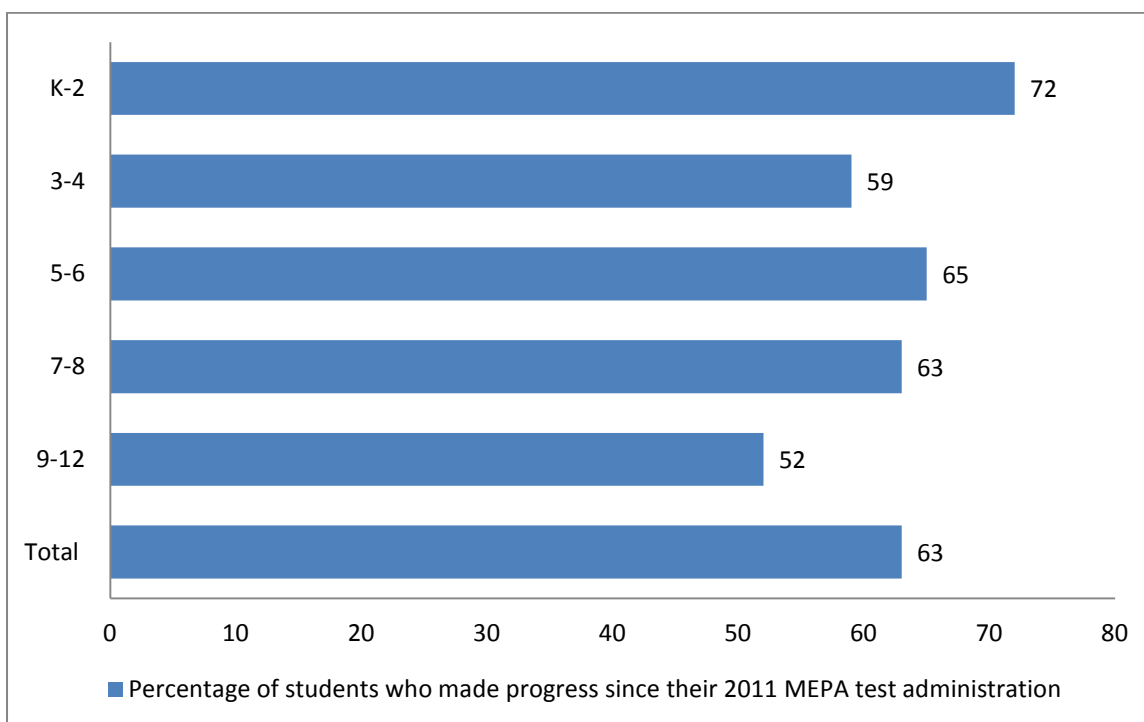
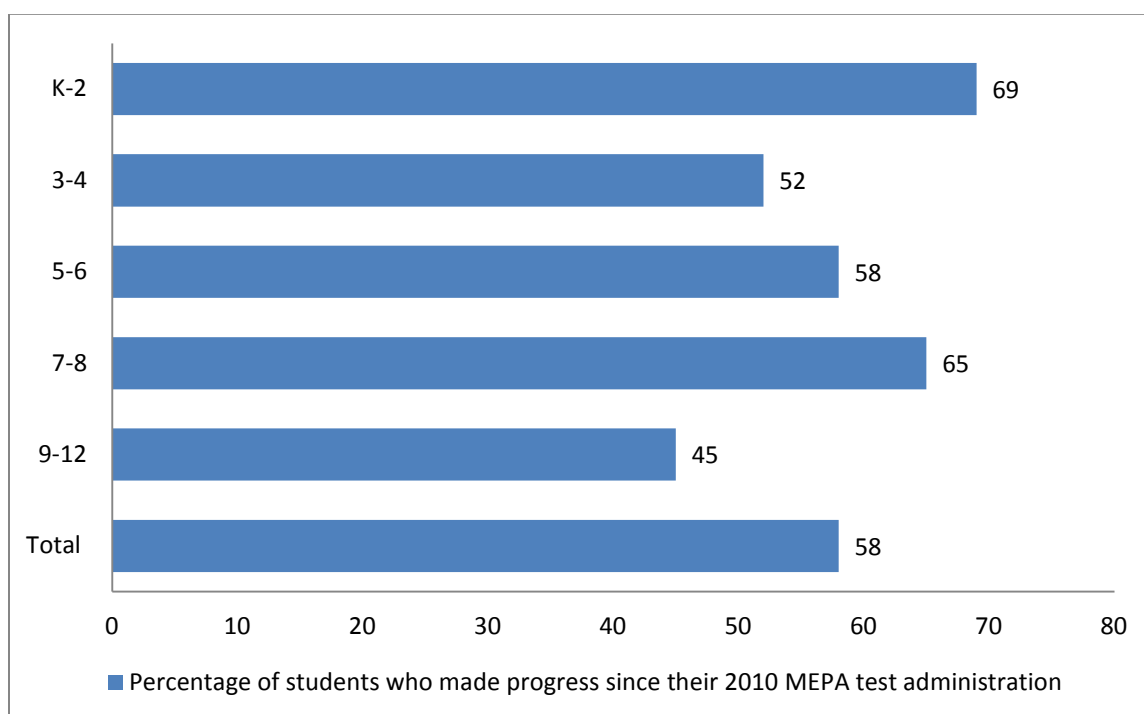


Figure 3. Students Making Progress by Grade Span in Spring 2011 MEPA



I. Background

MEPA consisted of two separate components, a reading and writing test (MEPA-R/W) and a listening and speaking observational assessment (MELA-O), both based on the Massachusetts *English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes* (ELPBO), available at www.doe.mass.edu/ell/benchmark.pdf.

The MEPA-R/W assessed reading and writing knowledge and skills. All ELL students in grades K–12, with the few exceptions described on page 1, were required to participate in the MEPA-R/W, which was developed for ELLs in five grade spans: K–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8, and 9–12. In grades 3–12, the reading and writing tests each consisted of three test sessions of increasing language complexity. Each student participated in two adjacent sessions of reading and two adjacent sessions of writing (i.e., either sessions 1 and 2, or 2 and 3). In making decisions about which two sessions each student would take, schools were instructed to consider results of locator tests (developed by the Department and administered locally), and other factors, to evaluate which two test sessions best matched the student’s level of language proficiency.

In grades K–2, students were administered either Level A or Level B tests in reading and writing according to their level of English language proficiency and literacy, informed by the use of a locator survey and by:

- the student’s scores on English proficiency assessments used by the district;
- the student’s classroom work;
- observations by staff working closely with each student, based on the 2009 MEPA Performance Level Descriptors.

The MELA-O was locally-administered by a trained administrator who assessed the student’s listening (comprehension) and speaking (production) skills in English using the MELA-O Scoring Matrix, a holistic scoring guide. All ELL students in grades K–12, except those who are deaf or hard of hearing, were required to participate in the MELA-O.

The assessment scores were combined in the four areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing to yield one of five MEPA performance levels: *Level 1*, *Level 2*, *Level 3*, *Level 4*, and *Level 5*. Generally, a student who scored at *Level 5* was able to perform ordinary classroom work in English and was recommended for reclassification as a student who is no longer reported to the Department as an ELL. Only students who participated in all four assessment domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) received an overall MEPA scaled score and a performance level.

In spring 2012, there were 1,024 students, or 1.4% of the all ELLs, who received MELA-O scores, but did not participate in the spring 2012 MEPA reading and writing tests due to a lack of available accommodations. These students did not receive a scaled score and performance level for the spring MEPA test and were therefore not included as tested students for the spring 2012 MEPA test.

The MEPA tests were administered twice during the school year, once in the fall as a baseline assessment for newly enrolled ELL students in grades 1–12 (or enrolled students who did not participate in MEPA the previous spring), and again in the spring for *all* ELL students enrolled in grades K–12.

Redesigned MEPA

For the spring 2009 administration of MEPA, the tests were redesigned to more accurately measure the level of English proficiency of ELL students, particularly at the very low and high ends of the performance continuum, and to be more useful to educators in making reclassification decisions for students. As part of the redesign, new MEPA-R/W tests for grade span K–2 were developed to assess the reading and writing proficiency of students in those grades.

The redesigned MEPA included two important changes: a new reporting scale and new performance level descriptors. The new reporting scale of 400–550 replaced the former reporting scale of 300–400. The 150-point scaled score range allows for reporting the full range of item difficulty and for reporting five performance levels instead of four.

The 2009 MEPA performance levels (*Level 1*, *Level 2*, *Level 3*, *Level 4*, and *Level 5*) replaced the previous performance levels (*Beginning*, *Early Intermediate*, *Intermediate*, and *Transitioning*). A standard-setting was conducted following the administration of the spring 2009 MEPA tests to set cut scores based on the new performance levels. The scaled score ranges are provided in Appendix A. MEPA performance level descriptors are provided in Appendix B.

In 2012, computer-based MEPA testing was offered to schools on a voluntary basis, and approximately 15 percent of students in grades 3–12 participated in the online tests. The year 2012 marked the third year that Massachusetts administered online MEPA tests.

Definition of Students Who Are “Making Progress”

The 2012 progress determinations are generated for ELL students who participated in all portions of the MEPA test (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in spring 2012 and who had a baseline performance either from spring or fall 2011. The Department based its definition of making progress on research into typical language acquisition patterns and the amount of improvement a beginning English learner must make each year in order to transition out of ELL services in five to six years. In order to determine whether a student is making progress, each of the lower four performance levels (*Levels 1–4*) was divided into two performance level steps (Low and High) and *Level 5* (500–550) was divided into five 10-point steps.

For students whose baseline 2011 MEPA score was from the *same* grade-span test as in spring 2011, the Department defined “making progress” as advancing *two* or more performance level steps until they reached *Level 3* High. After a student reached *Level 3* High, progress was defined as advancing *one* performance level step, as described in the table on the following page.

For students whose baseline MEPA score was from a *lower* grade-span test than the test taken in spring 2012, progress was defined as advancing at least *one* performance level step, except for students with a baseline MEPA score at *Level 5* who must have remained at *Level 5* in spring 2012.

Definition of Students Who Are “Making Progress”

If student took <i>same</i> grade-span test in spring 2012 and spring or fall 2011 (e.g., grade span 5–6 in spring 2012 and grade span 5–6 in spring or fall 2011)	
Baseline performance level	Definition of making progress
Between Level 1 Low and Level 3 Low	Must advance 2 steps
Between Level 3 High and Level 5	Must advance 1 step
If student took <i>different</i> grade-span test in spring 2012 and spring or fall 2011 (e.g., grade span 5–6 in spring 2012 and grade span 3–4 in spring or fall 2011)	
Baseline performance level	Definition of making progress
Between Level 1 Low and Level 4 High	Must advance 1 step
Level 5	Must maintain Level 5

II. Summary of the Spring 2012 Statewide MEPA Results

Student Participation

Participation in the spring 2012 MEPA tests is summarized below and includes students in grades K–12 who participated in all four MEPA assessment domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Table 1 provides the number and percentage of enrolled ELL students statewide who participated in the spring 2012 MEPA tests by grade span and years of enrollment in Massachusetts.*

In spring 2012, 67,825 of the 71,636 ELL students in the state participated in the MEPA tests, an overall participation rate of 95 percent, an increase from 94 percent in spring 2011. Participation rates increased at each grade span from 2011 to 2012, except grade span K-2, which remained the same at 97%, as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Participation of ELL Students in Spring 2012 and Spring 2011 MEPA by Grade Span and Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts

Administration / Years of Enrollment	Grades K–2		Grades 3–4		Grades 5–6		Grades 7–8		Grades 9–12		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Spring 2012												
First Year	9,845	97	1,163	95	1,158	96	1,156	96	2,350	93	15,672	96
Second Year	8,187	98	1,207	97	1,061	97	1,148	97	2,384	94	13,987	97
Third Year	6,552	98	1,058	97	961	97	801	95	1,982	93	11,354	97
Fourth Year	862	98	4,765	97	676	93	636	94	1,329	92	8,268	95
Fifth Year or More	6	100	4,942	97	6,119	95	3,550	92	3,670	79	18,287	91
All Students^a	25,519	97	13,161	97	10,006	96	7,325	94	11,814	88	67,825	95
Spring 2011												
First Year	9,441	96	1,369	95	1,246	96	1,363	96	2,550	93	15,969	95
Second Year	7,992	97	1,136	97	1,042	97	1,033	96	2,354	93	13,557	96
Third Year	6,472	98	1,081	96	841	95	768	94	1,705	90	10,867	96
Fourth Year	866	97	4,719	96	668	96	584	94	1,215	86	8,052	95
Fifth Year or More	8	89	4,566	96	5,934	94	3,330	90	3,343	74	17,181	89
All Students^a	24,783	97	12,873	96	9,734	95	7,081	93	11,184	85	65,655	94

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

In spring 2012, grade span K–2 had the highest participation rate at 97 percent, and grade span 9–12 had the lowest at 88 percent. Overall participation at grade span K–2 remained the same, and had the highest percentage across the number of years students had been enrolled in Massachusetts schools, with rates of 97 percent or higher.

At grade spans 3-4, 5-6, and 7–8, the overall student participation rates increased one percentage point. At grade span 9-12, the overall student participation rates increased three percentage points.

* The number of enrolled ELL students in 2012 includes students reported as ELL in the Department’s March 2012 Student Information Management System (SIMS) enrollment data, but excludes those ELLs who were reported on the test answer booklets as transferred students. This number also includes students who were not reported as ELL in the March 2012 SIMS, but participated in the spring 2012 MEPA administration.

While participation at grade span 9–12 had been lower than those of the other grade spans historically, the overall participation rate in this grade span increased by three percentage points, from 85 percent to 88 percent on the spring 2012 MEPA test, the largest overall percentage point increase among all grade spans. Specifically, the participation rate increased from 93 to 94 percent for students who had been enrolled in Massachusetts schools for two years, from 90 to 93 percent for students who had enrolled in Massachusetts schools for three years, from 86 to 92 percent for students had been enrolled in Massachusetts schools for four years, and from 74 to 79 percent for students who had been enrolled in Massachusetts schools for five or more years.

Student Performance

MEPA results for the spring 2012 and spring 2011 test administrations, disaggregated by years of enrollment for each grade span, are summarized below.

Grade Span K–2

At grade span K–2, 10 percent of all ELL students who participated in the spring 2012 MEPA tests performed at *Level 5*, identical to the rate in spring 2011. The average scaled score increased by one point from 478 in spring 2011 to 479 in spring 2012. In 2012, 7 percent of students in their second year of enrollment, 27 percent of those in their third year of enrollment, and 19 percent of students in their fourth year of enrollment performed at *Level 5*. A total of 6 percent of ELL students in grade span K–2 performed at *Level 1*, 17 percent at *Level 2*, 40 percent at *Level 3*, and 27 percent at *Level 4*.

**Table 2. Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 and Spring 2011 MEPA by Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts:
Grade Span K–2**

Administration / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level					
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	
Spring 2012								
First Year	9,845	467	14	33	44	9	0	
Second Year	8,187	482	2	10	48	33	7	
Third Year	6,552	493	0	2	25	45	27	
Fourth Year	862	491	0	2	29	50	19	
Fifth Year or More	6		-	-	-	-	-	
All Students ^a	2,5519	479	6	17	40	27	10	
Spring 2011								
First Year	9,441	465	19	36	38	7	1	
Second Year	7,992	481	2	11	50	31	6	
Third Year	6,472	493	0	2	27	44	27	
Fourth Year	866	491	0	2	29	49	20	
Fifth Year or More	8		-	-	-	-	-	
All Students ^a	24,783	478	8	18	38	26	10	

Results are not reported if fewer than 10 students were tested.

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

Grade Span 3–4

At grade span 3–4, 24 percent of participating ELL students performed at *Level 5* in spring 2012, compared to 20 percent in spring 2011. The average scaled score increased by four points from 482 in spring 2011 to 486 in spring 2012. In 2012, the percentage of ELL students in grades 3–4 performing at *Level 5* increased from 4 percent in spring 2011 to 6 percent in spring 2012 in their first year of enrollment, 14 percent in their second year of enrollment, 21 percent in their third and fourth year of enrollment, and 34 percent in their fifth year of enrollment. A total of 3 percent of ELL students in grade span 3–4 performed at *Level 1*, 5 percent performed at *Level 2*, 16 percent at *Level 3*, and 53 percent at *Level 4*.

Table 3. Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 and Spring 2011 MEPA by Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts: Grade Span 3–4							
Administration / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level				
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Spring 2012							
First Year	1,163	453	30	20	21	22	6
Second Year	1,207	475	4	13	27	42	14
Third Year	1,058	484	1	6	21	52	21
Fourth Year	4,765	488	0	2	16	61	21
Fifth Year or More	4,942	494	0	1	10	55	34
All Students ^a	1,3161	486	3	5	16	53	24
Spring 2011							
First Year	1,369	450	33	21	22	20	4
Second Year	1,136	470	7	17	29	36	11
Third Year	1,081	482	1	6	27	47	19
Fourth Year	4,719	486	0	2	20	60	18
Fifth Year or More	4,566	491	0	2	15	55	29
All Students ^a	12,873	482	4	6	20	51	20

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was available for some students.

Grade Span 5–6

At grade span 5–6, the percentage of participating ELL students who performed at *Level 5* increased from 32 percent in spring 2011 to 38 percent in spring 2012. The average scaled score rose from 487 in spring 2011 to 490 in spring 2012. In 2012, the percentage of ELL students performing at *Level 5* in grade span 5–6 in their first year of enrollment increased from 7 percent in spring 2011 to 9 percent of students in spring 2012, 19 percent in their second year of enrollment, 29 percent in their third year of enrollment, 37 percent in their fourth year of enrollment, and 48 percent in their fifth year of enrollment. A total of 4 percent of ELL students in grade span 5–6 performed at *Level 1*, 6 percent performed at *Level 2*, 16 percent at *Level 3*, and 36 percent at *Level 4*.

Table 4. Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 and Spring 2011 MEPA by Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts: Grade Span 5–6							
Administration / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level				
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Spring 2012							
First Year	1,158	457	29	24	23	16	9
Second Year	1,061	478	5	17	30	30	19
Third Year	961	487	2	9	25	36	29
Fourth Year	676	494	1	3	20	40	37
Fifth Year or More	6,119	499	0	1	11	40	48
All Students ^a	10,006	490	4	6	16	36	38
Spring 2011							
First Year	1,246	454	32	24	23	14	7
Second Year	1,042	473	7	21	31	27	15
Third Year	841	486	1	6	31	36	26
Fourth Year	668	490	0	4	26	40	29
Fifth Year or More	5,934	497	0	1	15	42	42
All Students ^a	9,734	487	5	7	20	36	32

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

Grade Span 7–8

At grade span 7–8, 34 percent of participating ELL students performed at *Level 5* in spring 2012, an increase from 33 percent in spring 2011. The average scaled score increased from 487 in spring 2011 to 489 in spring 2012. In 2012, the percentage of ELL students performing at *Level 5* in grades 7–8 increased from 10 percent in spring 2011 to 13 percent in spring 2012 in their first year of enrollment, to 19 percent of students in their second year of enrollment, to 28 percent in their third year of enrollment, to 38 percent in their fourth year of enrollment, but dropped one percent to 47 percent in their fifth year of enrollment or higher. A total of 6 percent of ELL students in grade span 7–8 performed at *Level 1*, 9 percent performed at *Level 2*, 23 percent performed at *Level 3*, and 28 percent performed at *Level 4*.

**Table 5. Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 and Spring 2011 MEPA
by Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts:
Grade Span 7–8**

Administration / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level				
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Spring 2012							
First Year	1,156	464	27	25	22	13	13
Second Year	1,148	480	7	20	33	22	19
Third Year	801	488	2	10	34	26	28
Fourth Year	636	495	0	5	25	31	38
Fifth Year or More	3,550	500	0	2	17	35	47
All Students ^a	7,325	489	6	9	23	28	34
Spring 2011							
First Year	1,363	461	32	25	21	13	10
Second Year	1,033	478	7	24	31	20	18
Third Year	768	487	1	11	33	27	27
Fourth Year	584	494	1	7	26	30	37
Fifth Year or More	3,330	499	0	2	18	32	48
All Students ^a	7,081	487	7	11	23	26	33

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

Grade Span 9–12

At grade span 9–12, the percentage of participating ELL students who performed at *Level 5* increased from 20 percent in spring 2011 to 24 percent in spring 2012. The average scaled score increased from 482 in spring 2011 to 484 in spring 2012. In 2012, the percentage of ELL students in grades 9–12 performing at *Level 5* increased from 10 percent in spring 2011 to 11 percent in spring 2012 in their first year of enrollment, to 18 percent in their second year of enrollment, to 26 percent in their third year of enrollment, to 28 percent in their fourth year of enrollment, and to 33 percent of students in their fifth year of enrollment or higher. A total of 9 percent of ELL students in grade span 9–12 performed at *Level 1*, 10 percent performed at *Level 2*, 36 percent performed at *Level 3*, and 21 percent performed at *Level 4*.

Table 6. Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 and Spring 2011 MEPA by Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts: Grade Span 9–12							
Administration / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level				
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Spring 2012							
First Year	2,350	467	29	20	30	10	11
Second Year	2,384	480	8	16	39	18	18
Third Year	1,982	487	4	9	42	19	26
Fourth Year	1,329	489	2	6	40	24	28
Fifth Year or More	3,670	493	1	3	34	29	33
All Students ^a	11,814	484	9	10	36	21	24
Spring 2011							
First Year	2,550	466	28	22	30	10	10
Second Year	2,354	479	9	16	43	16	16
Third Year	1,705	484	4	10	45	20	20
Fourth Year	1,215	487	2	6	46	24	22
Fifth Year or More	3,343	492	1	4	38	27	31
All Students ^a	11,184	482	9	12	39	19	20
^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.							

Progress of Students Toward Attaining English Proficiency

Table 7 on the following page displays the percentages of students who made progress toward attaining English proficiency by grade span and the number of years they have attended Massachusetts public schools.

Overall, 63 percent of ELL students who participated in the spring 2012 MEPA tests and who also participated in spring or fall 2011 made progress toward attaining English proficiency, a 5 percentage point increase from 58 percent in spring 2011. Progress varied by grade span, with 72 percent making progress at grade span K–2, 59 percent at grade span 3–4, 65 percent at grade span 5–6, 63 percent at grade span 7–8, and 52 percent at grade span 9–12.

In general, with the exception of grade span 3–4, younger ELL students were more likely to make progress than older ELL students; students in their first year of enrollment were least likely to make progress; and students in their second year of enrollment were most likely to make progress, with the likelihood of subsequent progress decreasing, the longer students had been enrolled.

The percentages of students making progress displayed in Table 7 were calculated based on a comparison of the MEPA test scores of ELL students who participated in all portions of the MEPA-R/W and MELA-O in spring 2012 and their baseline MEPA test scores from spring 2011 or fall 2011. See pages 5 and 6 for information on how progress is measured.

**Table 7. Progress of ELL Students Participating in Spring 2012 MEPA
by Grade Span and Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts**

Grade Span / Years of Enrollment	Number of Students Included^a	Percentage of Students Making Progress
Grades K–2		
First Year	1,040	59
Second Year	7,945	73
Third Year	6,425	74
Fourth Year	851	65
Fifth Year or More	6	
All Students^b	16269	72
Grades 3–4		
First Year	761	65
Second Year	1,175	81
Third Year	1,025	70
Fourth Year	4,693	46
Fifth Year or More	4,857	64
All Students^b	12512	59
Grades 5–6		
First Year	814	54
Second Year	1,039	87
Third Year	941	74
Fourth Year	656	68
Fifth Year or More	5,969	61
All Students^b	9421	65
Grades 7–8		
First Year	753	51
Second Year	1,118	83
Third Year	779	72
Fourth Year	611	66
Fifth Year or More	3,362	56
All Students^b	6624	63
Grades 9–12		
First Year	1,536	41
Second Year	2,335	69
Third Year	1,942	56
Fourth Year	1,289	52
Fifth Year or More	3,489	45
All Students^b	10614	52
Total		
First Year	4,904	52
Second Year	13,612	75
Third Year	11,112	71
Fourth Year	8,100	52
Fifth Year or More	17,683	58
All Students^b	55,440	63

^a This figure represents the number of students tested in spring 2012 who were also tested in spring or fall 2011.

^b Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

III. Performance of ELL Students from the State's Highest- Incidence First Language Groups

Tables 8–14 display the results of ELL students on the spring 2012 MEPA tests by grade span and years of enrollment disaggregated for the seven highest incidence first languages of the students participating: Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Cape Verdean, Vietnamese, and Khmer. Appendix C provides the number and percentage of enrolled ELL students for the 20 highest-incidence first language groups in the state.

**Table 8: Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 MEPA
by Grade Span and Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts
First Language SPANISH**

Grade Span / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level					
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	
Grades K–2								
First Year	4,851	465	16	38	41	5	0	
Second Year	4,163	478	2	14	54	27	4	
Third Year	3,398	491	0	3	31	45	21	
Fourth Year	610	490	0	2	30	50	19	
Fifth Year or More ^a	6							
All Students ^b	13,042	477	7	19	42	24	8	
Grades 3–4								
First Year	577	445	41	21	18	17	3	
Second Year	557	470	4	17	35	38	7	
Third Year	468	480	1	8	25	51	15	
Fourth Year	2,413	485	0	3	20	62	15	
Fifth Year or More	2,865	491	0	1	12	58	28	
All Students ^b	6,885	483	4	5	18	54	19	
Grades 5–6								
First Year	563	447	41	26	19	10	5	
Second Year	551	472	6	21	32	28	13	
Third Year	455	482	2	11	32	35	20	
Fourth Year	344	488	1	4	27	41	28	
Fifth Year or More	3,589	496	0	1	14	42	43	
All Students ^b	5,514	487	5	7	18	37	33	
Grades 7–8								
First Year	558	455	37	30	18	8	7	
Second Year	556	471	10	28	35	18	9	
Third Year	428	484	2	14	38	27	20	
Fourth Year	351	491	0	6	31	31	32	
Fifth Year or More	2,157	497	0	2	21	36	40	
All Students ^b	4,057	486	7	11	25	28	28	
Grades 9–12								
First Year	1,032	457	43	21	23	7	5	
Second Year	945	472	14	24	39	14	10	
Third Year	895	482	6	12	47	17	18	
Fourth Year	639	486	3	8	43	23	23	
Fifth Year or More	2,255	491	1	4	38	28	29	
All Students ^b	5,781	480	12	12	37	20	19	

^a Results are not reported if fewer than 10 students were tested.

^b Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

**Table 9: Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 MEPA
by Grade Span and Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts
First Language PORTUGUESE**

Grade Span / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level				
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Grades K–2							
First Year	909	467	14	32	48	6	0
Second Year	674	483	1	5	50	37	7
Third Year	514	495	0	1	21	46	32
Fourth Year	41	492	0	0	27	63	10
Fifth Year or More	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
All Students ^a	2,140	479	6	15	42	26	10
Grades 3–4							
First Year	52	451	25	31	17	25	2
Second Year	61	482	0	10	23	52	15
Third Year	72	492	0	1	7	67	25
Fourth Year	349	490	0	1	12	65	21
Fifth Year or More	273	496	0	0	8	52	39
All Students ^a	809	489	2	3	11	57	26
Grades 5–6							
First Year	63	464	21	17	32	22	8
Second Year	33	492	3	6	15	42	33
Third Year	51	495	0	0	14	49	37
Fourth Year	31	502	0	0	13	32	55
Fifth Year or More	297	505	0	0	5	35	59
All Students ^a	478	497	3	3	11	35	48
Grades 7–8							
First Year	73	463	26	15	37	15	7
Second Year	48	490	4	2	33	33	27
Third Year	31	499	0	3	16	26	55
Fourth Year	31	505	0	3	6	29	61
Fifth Year or More	133	506	0	0	8	30	62
All Students ^a	317	493	7	4	19	26	43
Grades 9–12							
First Year	135	473	18	18	40	12	13
Second Year	141	485	4	13	40	22	21
Third Year	92	493	0	2	38	27	33
Fourth Year	58	496	0	0	28	29	43
Fifth Year or More	109	498	0	2	22	40	36
All Students ^a	540	487	6	9	34	25	26

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

**Table 10: Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 MEPA
by Grade Span and Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts
First Language HAITIAN CREOLE**

Grade Span / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level					
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	
Grades K–2								
First Year	350	468	10	32	50	7	1	
Second Year	299	481	2	11	46	36	5	
Third Year	241	490	0	3	30	48	18	
Fourth Year	39	491	0	3	18	62	18	
Fifth Year or More	0	–	–	–	–	–	–	
All Students ^a	930	479	4	16	42	29	7	
Grades 3–4								
First Year	76	447	30	32	17	21	0	
Second Year	102	477	2	11	23	53	12	
Third Year	97	484	1	5	19	57	19	
Fourth Year	215	486	1	2	20	57	20	
Fifth Year or More	223	492	0	2	10	61	27	
All Students ^a	714	482	4	7	17	54	19	
Grades 5–6								
First Year	76	458	16	38	25	14	7	
Second Year	107	483	1	9	29	42	19	
Third Year	106	491	0	8	19	38	36	
Fourth Year	48	498	0	0	13	44	44	
Fifth Year or More	236	496	0	1	14	44	41	
All Students ^a	574	488	2	9	19	38	32	
Grades 7–8								
First Year	93	469	17	26	27	22	9	
Second Year	125	485	2	13	34	30	21	
Third Year	78	495	1	1	28	27	42	
Fourth Year	34	493	0	9	29	21	41	
Fifth Year or More	147	500	0	2	14	37	48	
All Students ^a	477	489	4	10	25	29	32	
Grades 9–12								
First Year	281	470	20	25	35	11	10	
Second Year	329	486	3	9	45	20	23	
Third Year	200	495	1	5	34	17	44	
Fourth Year	92	491	1	2	43	26	27	
Fifth Year or More	200	496	0	3	34	24	41	
All Students ^a	1108	485	7	10	38	18	27	

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

**Table 11: Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 MEPA
by Grade Span and Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts
First Language CHINESE^a**

Grade Span / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level				
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Grades K–2							
First Year	587	469	16	30	37	17	1
Second Year	524	488	0	3	37	45	14
Third Year	421	499	0	1	12	43	43
Fourth Year	13	497	0	0	23	31	46
Fifth Year or More	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
All Students ^b	1,550	484	6	13	30	34	17
Grades 3–4							
First Year	60	462	25	22	18	13	22
Second Year	51	485	2	8	20	51	20
Third Year	59	487	0	3	19	54	24
Fourth Year	284	497	0	0	4	65	31
Fifth Year or More	226	505	0	0	3	36	62
All Students ^b	680	495	2	3	7	49	39
Grades 5–6							
First Year	63	461	21	21	32	21	6
Second Year	44	477	5	18	39	14	25
Third Year	46	487	0	7	35	35	24
Fourth Year	29	495	7	3	10	38	41
Fifth Year or More	213	508	0	0	5	35	60
All Students ^b	397	493	5	7	17	30	42
Grades 7–8							
First Year	59	478	20	20	15	12	32
Second Year	57	496	2	5	25	30	39
Third Year	50	487	2	8	48	14	28
Fourth Year	21	498	0	0	24	38	38
Fifth Year or More	79	509	0	3	6	24	.67
All Students ^b	267	494	5	8	21	22	43
Grades 9–12							
First Year	162	475	16	20	35	9	21
Second Year	186	485	4	14	37	24	21
Third Year	151	486	5	12	36	22	25
Fourth Year	50	492	4	4	32	18	42
Fifth Year or More	113	496	0	4	26	33	37
All Students ^b	668	485	7	12	34	21	26

^a The Chinese language group includes the students whose first language was reported in SIMS as Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin, or Taiwanese.

^b Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

**Table 12: Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 MEPA
by Grade Span and Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts
First Language CAPE VERDEAN**

Grade Span / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level				
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Grades K–2							
First Year	272	463	20	41	37	2	0
Second Year	200	478	2	11	65	21	2
Third Year	192	490	1	1	34	44	21
Fourth Year	19	489	0	0	42	47	11
Fifth Year or More	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
All Students ^a	683	476	8	20	45	21	7
Grades 3–4							
First Year	44	430	59	25	14	2	0
Second Year	47	459	13	28	26	34	0
Third Year	47	478	0	4	30	53	13
Fourth Year	197	484	1	3	24	55	18
Fifth Year or More	205	488	0	1	18	57	23
All Students ^a	542	478	7	6	21	49	16
Grades 5–6							
First Year	52	436	52	31	15	0	2
Second Year	52	464	6	27	46	19	2
Third Year	50	481	0	16	30	32	22
Fourth Year	38	490	0	3	11	63	24
Fifth Year or More	266	498	0	0	11	41	47
All Students ^a	458	485	7	9	18	35	32
Grades 7–8							
First Year	57	450	39	35	21	4	2
Second Year	88	475	5	23	42	23	8
Third Year	48	484	2	15	33	31	19
Fourth Year	62	494	0	3	24	34	39
Fifth Year or More	178	500	0	1	14	35	50
All Students ^a	433	486	6	12	24	28	30
Grades 9–12							
First Year	183	464	29	22	38	5	6
Second Year	198	479	10	13	42	17	18
Third Year	182	486	1	9	51	18	21
Fourth Year	155	491	1	4	40	30	26
Fifth Year or More	253	495	0	4	30	22	43
All Students ^a	972	483	8	10	40	18	24

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

**Table 13: Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 MEPA
by Grade Span and Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts
First Language VIETNAMESE**

Grade Span / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level				
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Grades K–2							
First Year	368	469	8	29	52	9	1
Second Year	376	485	1	7	44	37	12
Third Year	335	499	0	0	14	47	38
Fourth Year	20	494	0	0	25	45	30
Fifth Year or More	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
All Students ^a	1099	484	3	12	37	31	17
Grades 3–4							
First Year	13	465	15	23	31	8	23
Second Year	32	474	3	9	34	41	13
Third Year	14	491	0	0	14	79	7
Fourth Year	274	494	0	0	8	58	32
Fifth Year or More	241	499	0	1	5	45	49
All Students ^a	574	495	1	2	9	51	37
Grades 5–6							
First Year	21	459	10	33	43	10	5
Second Year	24	481	0	17	33	21	29
Third Year	15	494	0	7	20	33	40
Fourth Year	18	498	0	0	11	39	50
Fifth Year or More	291	506	0	1	6	30	64
All Students ^a	369	501	1	4	11	29	56
Grades 7–8							
First Year	25	470	8	48	20	4	20
Second Year	25	499	4	4	16	24	52
Third Year	12	500	0	0	33	8	58
Fourth Year	17	502	0	6	6	41	47
Fifth Year or More	110	507	0	0	7	27	65
All Students ^a	189	500	2	7	12	24	56
Grades 9–12							
First Year	73	473	18	15	49	7	11
Second Year	110	489	2	9	40	19	30
Third Year	53	494	2	4	34	23	38
Fourth Year	44	489	2	7	39	27	25
Fifth Year or More	86	498	0	1	20	33	47
All Students ^a	366	489	5	7	36	21	31

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

^b Results are not reported if fewer than 10 students were tested.

**Table 14: Performance of ELL Students in Spring 2012 MEPA
by Grade Span and Years of Enrollment in Massachusetts
First Language KHMER**

Grade Span / Years of Enrollment	Number Tested	Average Scaled Score	Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level				
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Grades K–2							
First Year	227	466	8	37	.48	7	0
Second Year	263	480	1	11	52	32	3
Third Year	274	492	0	2	27	49	23
Fourth Year	23	488	0	9	35	48	9
Fifth Year or More	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
All Students ^a	787	480	3	15	42	31	9
Grades 3–4							
First Year ^b	7	—	—	—	—	—	—
Second Year	11	472	9	9	36	36	9
Third Year	15	484	0	7	20	60	13
Fourth Year	228	488	0	1	15	65	18
Fifth Year or More	241	497	0	1	7	51	41
All Students ^a	502	491	0	2	12	57	28
Grades 5–6							
First Year ^b	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Second Year ^b	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Third Year	13	501	0	0	8	54	38
Fourth Year ^b	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fifth Year or More	403	502	0	1	7	37	55
All Students ^a	435	501	0	2	9	37	52
Grades 7–8							
First Year	13	470	15	15	62	0	8
Second Year ^b	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Third Year ^b	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fourth Year ^b	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fifth Year or More	286	504	0	1	10	33	56
All Students ^a	315	502	1	1	14	32	52
Grades 9–12							
First Year	16	481	0	19	50	19	13
Second Year	27	482	4	11	44	37	4
Third Year	20	486	0	20	20	45	15
Fourth Year	17	494	6	0	35	18	41
Fifth Year or More	193	497	0	2	30	25	44
All Students ^a	273	493	1	5	32	27	36

^a Number of students tested by years of enrollment may not equal the total for all students because number of years of enrollment was not available for some students.

^b Results are not reported if fewer than 10 students were tested.

Appendix A. MEPA Scaled Score Ranges for Each Performance Level

Five performance levels are used to report MEPA results: *Level 1*, *Level 2*, *Level 3*, *Level 4*, and *Level 5*. The overall scaled score range is 400 to 550. The scaled score ranges for each performance level are shown below for each grade span.

Grade Span	Scaled Score Range	MEPA Scaled Score Ranges				
		Performance Level Ranges				
		<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4</i>	<i>Level 5</i>
K–2	400–550	400–452	453–465	466–484	485–499	500–550
3–4	400–550	400–431	432–451	452–473	474–499	500–550
5–6	400–550	400–435	436–455	456–478	479–499	500–550
7–8	400–550	400–442	443–463	464–485	486–499	500–550
9–12	400–550	400–449	450–463	464–488	489–499	500–550

Appendix B. MEPA Performance Level Descriptors

Grades K–2

Level 1 A student at *Level 1* cannot yet communicate in English, and errors almost always interfere with communication. Comprehension is demonstrated either without words, through a few basic English words, or in a language other than English.

A student performing at this level typically

- recognizes only a few letters of the alphabet and reads only a few simple words, with help;
 - writes only a few letters of the alphabet and may attempt to write words that are mostly incorrect;
 - speaks using only a few English words, with frequent errors, and cannot be understood easily;
 - understands only a little spoken English.
-

Level 2 A student at *Level 2* communicates using simple written and spoken English at school, with errors that often interfere with communication and understanding.

A student performing at this level typically

- recognizes many letters of the alphabet and reads a few simple words, with help;
 - writes some letters of the alphabet and a few basic words, with frequent errors;
 - speaks English using basic words and short phrases, and is generally difficult to understand;
 - recognizes some basic spoken words and phrases in English, with frequent repetition and explanation.
-

Level 3 A student at *Level 3* communicates using basic English at school, though errors sometimes interfere with communication and understanding.

A student performing at this level typically

- reads and understands many common words and most letters of the alphabet, including some grade-level academic language;
- writes commonly used words and simple sentences, with some errors;
- speaks English using common words, including some grade-level academic vocabulary, and basic grammar and sentence structure, with some errors;
- understands most basic spoken English, including some grade-level academic vocabulary, with some repetition and explanation.

Level 4 A student at *Level 4* is generally fluent in English at school. Oral and written communication is mostly correct and usually understandable, with few or minor errors.

A student performing at this level typically

- reads and understands most common words, including many grade-level academic words;
 - writes short sentences and short texts, with few errors;
 - speaks English with basic fluency, using grade-appropriate words and sentences, with occasional errors;
 - understands most spoken English during classroom discussions, including grade-level academic vocabulary, with only occasional repetition and explanation.
-

Level 5 A student at *Level 5* is fluent and communicates effectively in English across all academic subjects, with very few errors. Oral and written communication is correct and understandable.

A student performing at this level typically

- reads and understands most grade-level texts;
 - writes and edits grade-level texts with fluency, using standard grade-level English writing conventions;
 - speaks English with fluency, using grade-level academic vocabulary correctly;
 - understands spoken English, with little or no need for repetition or explanation.
-

MEPA Performance Level Descriptors

Grades 3–12

Level 1 A student at *Level 1* cannot yet communicate in English, and errors almost always interfere with communication. Comprehension is demonstrated either without words, through a few basic English words, or in a language other than English.

A student performing at this level typically

- recognizes only a few letters of the alphabet and reads only a few simple words, with help;
- writes only a few letters of the alphabet and may attempt to write words that are mostly incorrect;
- speaks using only a few English words, with frequent errors, and cannot be understood easily;
- understands only a little spoken English.

<i>Level 2</i>	<p>A student at <i>Level 2</i> communicates using simple written and spoken English at school, with errors that often interfere with communication and understanding.</p> <p>A student performing at this level typically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizes many letters of the alphabet and reads a few simple words, with help; • writes some letters of the alphabet and a few basic words, with frequent errors; • speaks English using basic words and short phrases, and is generally difficult to understand; • recognizes some basic spoken words and phrases in English, with frequent repetition and explanation.
<i>Level 3</i>	<p>A student at <i>Level 3</i> communicates using basic English at school, though errors sometimes interfere with communication and understanding.</p> <p>A student performing at this level typically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads and understands many common words and most letters of the alphabet, including some grade-level academic language; • writes commonly used words and simple sentences, with some errors; • speaks English using common words, including some grade-level academic vocabulary, and basic grammar and sentence structure, with some errors; • understands most basic spoken English, including some grade-level academic vocabulary, with some repetition and explanation.
<i>Level 4</i>	<p>A student at <i>Level 4</i> is generally fluent in English at school. Oral and written communication is mostly correct and usually understandable, with few or minor errors.</p> <p>A student performing at this level typically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads and understands most common words, including many grade-level academic words; • writes short sentences and short texts, with few errors; • speaks English with basic fluency, using grade-appropriate words and sentences, with occasional errors; • understands most spoken English during classroom discussions, including grade-level academic vocabulary, with only occasional repetition and explanation.
<i>Level 5</i>	<p>A student at <i>Level 5</i> is fluent and communicates effectively in English across all academic subjects, with very few errors. Oral and written communication is correct and understandable.</p> <p>A student performing at this level typically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads and understands most grade-level texts; • writes and edits grade-level texts with fluency, using standard grade-level English writing conventions; • speaks English with fluency, using grade-level academic vocabulary correctly; • understands spoken English, with little or no need for repetition or explanation.

Appendix C. Number and Percentage of Enrolled ELL Students by 20 Highest-incidence First Languages

First Language ^a		Number	Percent
1.	Spanish	37,633	52.6
2.	Portuguese	4,432	6.2
3.	Haitian Creole	4,021	5.6
4.	Chinese ^b	3,672	5.1
5.	Cape Verdean	3,202	4.5
6.	Vietnamese	2,699	3.8
7.	Khmer/Khmai	2,386	3.3
8.	Arabic	1,756	2.5
9.	Russian	1,017	1.4
10.	Somali	664	0.9
11.	French	527	0.7
12.	Korean	525	0.7
13.	Albanian	493	0.7
14.	Nepali	475	0.7
15.	Japanese	353	0.5
16.	Twi	336	0.5
17.	Swahili	315	0.4
18.	Urdu	311	0.4
19.	Gujarati	297	0.4
20.	Hindi	238	0.3

^a Data of the 20 highest-incidence first language groups were based on March 2012 SIMS data.

^b The Chinese language group includes the students whose first language was reported in SIMS as Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin, or Taiwanese.